**GOULBURN**

**FAMILY DAY CARE**

Coordination Unit:

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Family Handbook

December 2019



**Introduction**

Anglicare is a not-for-profit organisation that provides a variety of early education and care services in NSW and the ACT, of which Goulburn Family Day Care is one. We have over 40 years’ experience managing early childhood programs and have a focus on providing quality early childhood education for children.

**Our Vision**

Leading Community Connections / Enriching Lives.

**Mission Statement**

Goulburn Family Day Care provides home-based early learning programs through skilled and experienced Educators who are supported by the Coordination Unit team to deliver quality education and care to children and families.

**Philosophy Statement**

Advocate – Connect – Play

We advocate for the rights of each child to be co-contributors of their learning journey whilst feeling safe, secure and supported.

We connect and demonstrate inclusivity with each educator, child, family and with our local community through respectful and culturally safe relationships.

We provide children with play based learning opportunities in a natural environment which incorporate sustainability and lead to a world of discovery and a love for learning.

Educators and staff embrace the Early Years Learning Framework and implement it in their daily interactions with children.

Goulburn Family Day Care upholds Early Childhood Australia’s Code of Ethics.

**What is Family Day Care?**

Family Day Care is an Early Childhood service where children are educated and cared for in small family groups in the homes of registered Educators. These Educators are approved, supervised, supported and encouraged by a team of qualified staff employed by Goulburn Family Day Care, referred to as the Coordination Unit, to help them provide quality early learning at home.

Most families choose Family Day Care because they believe it is the best environment for their small children. They place their children in the Goulburn Family Day Care scheme in the knowledge that our Educators are carefully selected and go through the checks to ensure they are appropriate people to educate children. Families also like the assurance that their Educator will be supported and monitored by trained professionals who will visit their children regularly.

Family Day Care allows for flexibility of hours and location, seven days per week for full-time, part-time, casual, and emergency care. Family Day Care caters for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years old as well as older children up to the age of 12 years during before and after school hours in in school holiday periods, in an environment similar to which they are accustomed at home.

**Role of the Scheme**

The major role of the Coordination Unit is to provide a support service to Educators and families. The Coordination Unit arranges the placement of children and administers Child Care Subsidy to the Educators on behalf of the families.

Anglicare Goulburn Family Day Care is approved by the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate, Department of Education and operates under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Education and Care Services National Law and National Quality Framework (NQF), and an assessment and ratings process.

**Educators**

Family Day Care Educators are early childhood education professionals, registered with an approved Family Day Care scheme. Goulburn Family Day Care Educators are not employed by the scheme, they are self-employed.

Educators support each other in the job by meetings, activities and social events, training, phone contact, joint outings, advice and emergency care. Play sessions, known as playgroup, are an essential part of our Coordination Unit program. They offer broader, educative experiences to the children and team support for the Educators. Playgroup is available on a weekly basis during school term time and Educators are encouraged to attend.

New Educators are referred to experienced Educators to visit and get advice and assistance, or for “mentoring”. Potential Educators are interviewed at the Coordination Unit by the Goulburn Family Day Care Director and Assistant Director to assess their suitability. This is followed by referee checks and a safety check of their home.

Educators are required to comply with the abovementioned national regulations, national law, quality and qualification standards, educational framework and the scheme’s Policies and Procedures. Family Day Care operates on a maximum of 7 children between birth and 12 years of age with a maximum of 4 children not attending school, including the Educator’s own children.

All Educators hold a minimum Certificate III in Children’s Services or are enrolled and actively studying towards achieving the Certificate III in Children’s Services.

Educators must have the following attributes:

* Practical early childhood knowledge and experience with children.
* Communicate well on various levels; be flexible, approachable, warm and caring.
* Good organisational and record-keeping skills.
* Be willing to work in partnership with the scheme staff and families.

Educators must also have:

* a current Working With Children Check, including any other residents aged 18 years or over,
* a current National Police Clearance,
* current first-aid, asthma and anaphylaxis management qualifications,
* public liability and professional indemnity insurance for a minimum of $10 million,
* a smoke, drug and alcohol free environment – including visitors,
* a program for individual children’s developmental ages and stages – complete developmental records and daily reflections and observations, and
* A safe playing area for children.

**Staff**

Goulburn Family Day Care currently employs three staff at its Coordination Unit office. The Director is responsible for the overall management of the service. The Educational Leader is responsible for the visitation and support of Educators, monitoring of early learning programs and observing the development of children in the service. The Playgroup Leader in consultation with the Educational Leader organise playgroup at the service premises three days per week, as well as resources and equipment for Educators.

Director & Nominated Supervisor: Ashley Sturgiss

Educational Leader: Skye Lewis

Playgroup Leader: Rhonda Perry

All staff have current Working with Children Checks, National Police Clearances, first-aid, asthma and anaphylaxis qualifications and undertake a variety of training each year to keep abreast of changes in the Early Childhood industry.

**National Quality Standard**

The National Quality Standard provides a set of standards that covers all aspects of Early Childhood Education.. It gives a

benchmark for the quality of education and care services across Australia. It gives services and families a better understanding of a quality service and enables families to make informed decisions about the services providing education and care to their child. The National Quality Standard brings together seven key areas that are important for quality outcomes for children.

The seven quality areas are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children’s health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Governance and Leadership

**Policies**

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require each scheme to develop various policies. Copies of these policies are available to view at the premises of the Educators and at the Goulburn Family Day Care Coordination Unit office.

**Family Interview of Educators**

Please contact the Educator(s) to arrange a convenient time prior to your visit. It is recommended that you prepare any questions you may want to ask the Educator and set enough time aside for the Educator to get to know you and your child.

There are many things to discuss together such as:

**Your child:** Discuss your child; what he/she enjoys, strengths, interests, comforters and routines. It is important that the Educator has a good understanding of your child to assist with the transition into the program.

**Children’s experiences:** Talk with the Educator about the program they provide, the environment and experiences your child would have. Consider the learning experiences, toys and resources the Educator uses and the spaces used for the program both inside and outside.

**Your expectations:** Discuss with the Educator your hopes and expectations for your child in the program. It is important to let the Educator know what is important to you so you can have input into the educational program provided.

**Food:** Discuss with the Educator your child’s likes and dislikes, allergies and foods you do and don’t want your child to have. It is also very important to discuss the stage your child is at with feeding. Are they still being breastfed, feeding themselves independently or needing assistance with feeding? If you are still breastfeeding your baby discuss this with the Educator and how you hope to do this whilst your child is in Family Day Care..

**Sleeping:** Discuss your child’s sleep patterns and look at where your child will sleep. It is important that your child’s Educator has details of your child’s comforters such as a dummy, blanket or favourite toy.

**Toileting:** Discuss what stage your child has reached with toileting so you and your Educator can work together.

**Guiding Behaviour:** Families have widely different views about guiding behaviour so discuss your attitudes regarding this issue and how your expectations will be met by the Educator. The Educator will be responding to the needs of all the children in the program and this must be considered.

**Routine:** Talk to the Educator about the daily routine. Some Educators need to incorporate other activities in their routine such as school pickups or playgroup. Educators may also take children out on local excursions. Excursions provide the opportunity to expand a child’s experience, enable them to explore their community and participate in new activities and develop social skills. Families should not accept the enrolment for their child until any excursions are discussed with the Educator and the family is willing to give permission for the excursions. Parents will be notified in advance of each outing. Goulburn Family Day Care has developed a set of policies and these are available to view at the Educator’s home or at the Coordination Unit office.

**Language:** Language is an important part of our program and children of non-English speaking backgrounds are given support to communicate. It is helpful to Educators if parents can provide a list of words in the child’s home language with English translations.

Discussing these issues is important in ensuring consistency of care and enables your child to settle easily into the new environment.

**Educator Programs**

The aim of the Educator programs is to provide daily experiences for children which stimulate learning, increase socialisation, promote physical growth and maintain emotional stability. The method of achieving this aim is different for each Educator. Educators will use a variety of ways of communicating with the families of children in their programs. Please talk to the Educator about their program and make suggestions of experiences, which your child and the other children may enjoy and from which they may benefit.

**Priority of Access Guidelines**

The Australian Government has Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating early childhood places that apply to CCS approved Family Day Care services. They set out three levels of priority, which Early Childhood Providers must follow when filling vacant places. Please speak with us if you have any questions regarding priority of access to our programs.

**Contact Details**

Educators are required to keep accurate records of your child’s enrolment with the service at all times. The names of parents/guardians, current addresses, home, work and mobile phone numbers and alternative emergency contact name(s) and number(s) must be provided by you.

Parents/guardians are required to maintain an operable phone during the time that their child is in attendance.

**Collection of Children**

If you are going to be late in collecting your child please contact your Educator as a matter of courtesy. Your child will only be released to people who are authorised in writing by you on the enrolment form or in writing in other circumstances. Your child will not be released if there is no authority from you.

If the person designated to collect your child from the program is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or appears otherwise unfit, your child will not be released to that person..

**Access to Children**

The Education and Care Services National Regulations clearly state that your Educator is not legally permitted to allow your child to leave the premises without your permission. Details of any court order, custody and access orders concerning your child are required to be stated on the enrolment form. Relevant documents need to be provided to the Coordination Unit office and the Educator.

Any natural parent identified on the enrolment form and not subject to any relevant court order may have access to his or her child at any time during the hours that the child is enrolled and receive information about the child on an ongoing basis.

**Privacy Principles**

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require collection of information on an enrolment form. This form is kept confidentially. One copy is kept at the Coordination Unit office and one copy is provided to the Educator you choose to enrol with..

In an emergency this information may also be given to emergency services personnel such as ambulance officers or the police. The Department of Education may also request this information.

**Support and Monitoring**

Once your child commences in the program your main contact will be with your child’s Educator. However, Coordination Unit staff will regularly visit the Educator’s home to provide support in their work and monitor your child’s learning and development.

During these visits observations are made of each child. These observations are recorded in a file kept at the Coordination Unit office. Should you at any time wish to discuss any aspect of your child’s learning or development or have access to these records please contact the Educational Leader or Director on 4823 4052.

**Children’s Activities**

Playgroup is held each week at the service premises for Educators and their enrolled children, providing stimulating learning experiences and encouraging social skills in a larger group setting.

Special children’s or family activities are organised on a regular basis. These special activities include concerts, Christmas events, picnics, family days and many more. All activities are advertised via our Educators. Please come along to these to meet other families, Educators and staff.

**Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness**

Sick children should not attend Family Day Care as they require a degree of attention that is not able to be provided in any early learning service. Sick children also place other children, Educators and the Educator’s household members at risk of developing an infection.

If your child is seriously ill or has contracted a contagious disease, your child will not be accepted into the program. If your child becomes ill whilst attending you will be contacted immediately. Under these circumstances you may need to obtain a medical certificate stating that your child is permitted to return to the program. Your child will not be administered any medication without your permission and each time that medication is administered your child’s Educator must make a record of the fact on a Medication Administer form. All medication must be in its original container with a pharmacy label clearly stating the child’s name, dosage and instructions for administration.

In the case of a serious accident involving hospitalisation parents/guardians, the Coordination Unit and the Department of Education and Communities will be informed. All accidents/injuries/illnesses will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Record form. If you cannot be contacted the Educator will take appropriate action (as specified and acknowledged on the enrolment form) and arrange for your child to be taken to the nearest doctor or hospital. You will be responsible for any and all expenses incurred.

A child with a chronic health problem such as asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, etc. can attend when their symptoms are managed. A management plan from a doctor is required for children who have a chronic health problem. This plan is to be updated yearly of if there are any changes to the conditions on the plan.

**Emergency Procedures**

Educators have emergency procedures to follow. Goulburn Family Day Care has developed guidelines on emergency procedures and these are available to view at the Educator’s home or the Coordination Unit office.

Each Educator has on display an emergency evacuation plan and practises emergency evacuations every three months with all children in the program so that they are prepared for any emergency that may arise. In the event of a large scale evacuation such as a bush fire, Educators and children will be evacuated to a pre-determined safe haven or a designated safe local evacuation centre. The parents/guardians will be contacted directly as soon as practicable following any emergency and given collection details. Each Educator has their own evacuation procedures updated annually which can be viewed at the Educator’s home.

**Immunisation Requirements**

The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) is a national register that records vaccinations given to children under seven years old. It also provides immunisation history statements to parents/guardians. Your child’s immunisation history on the Immunisation Register is required for proof of immunisation. You are required to provide our service with current immunisation status reports prior to your child commencing with us and also as updates occur.

From January 2018, only children who are fully immunised for their age OR have a medical reason not to be immunised OR are on a catch up schedule can be enrolled in an early childhood program. Children who have not been immunised due to their parent’s conscientious objection cannot be enrolled in our program. For more information visit: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/default.aspx>

**Educator Leave and Alternate Programs**

Educators close their service from time to time due to pre-planned reasons such as holidays or unplanned reasons such as illness.

If your child’s educator is intending to close for holidays they will notify you in advance. If you need our service during this time you should contact the Coordination Unit for the details of an alternate Educator who could assist you.

If the Educator (or a family member) is sick there may be little notice that they are closing their service. If you need an alternate Educator you can contact the Coordination Unit after 8:30am or if the program is needed earlier, the Educator will contact a staff member on the after hour’s emergency mobile.

Fees are not charged by an Educator when their service is closed. If your child goes to another Educator fees are charged at that Educator’s rate so please check the fees if you are referred to an alternate Educator.

The Coordination Unit staff will endeavour to find an alternate Educator when it is requested but it cannot be guaranteed in every instance. If you require extra days of attendance at any time and your child’s Educator is unable to assist you, please contact the Coordination Unit and we will endeavour to find you alternate placement.

**Child Care Subsidy**

**Child Care Subsidy (CCS)** – All Australian residents are eligible to receive assistance with the cost of early learning from the Department of Human Services through the CCS scheme.

This can be claimed by:

Reduction in fees – Your CCS payment is made directly to your Educator by the Coordination Unit. You will be liable to pay the balance or “gap” to your Educator. You will need to obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for yourself and your child/ren by contacting the Family Assistance Office (FAO) Hotline on **13 61 50** or by making an online claim for CCS via your My Gov Account. For assistance: <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/claiming>

**What is Child Care Subsidy?**

The Child Care Subsidy is the main way the Government assists families with their early learning fees.

**Child Care Subsidy Eligibility**

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child. These include:

* the age of the child (must be aged 13 or under and not attending secondary school, except in certain circumstances where an individual may be eligible for a child who does not meet this criteria, such as children with a disability or medical condition in certain circumstances)
* the child meeting immunisation requirements
* the individual, or their partner, meeting the residency requirements listed in the legislation.

In addition, to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy the individual must be liable to pay for programs provided, the programs must be delivered in Australia by an approved early childhood provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.

**Child Care Subsidy Entitlement**

There are three factors that determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy. These are:

* [Combined annual family income](https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-combined-annual-family-income)
* [Activity test](https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-activity-test) – the activity level of both parents
* [Service type](https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-service-type) – type of early learning service and whether the child attends school

The Child Care Subsidy is generally paid directly to service providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families make a co-contribution to their early learning fees and pay to the provider the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.

There is also targeted additional fee assistance for vulnerable families through the [Child Care Safety Net](https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-safety-net-1).

Families can get an estimate of what they may be entitled to by entering their details into the [Department of Human Services Payment and Service Finder](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/paymentfinder).

**Absences from Family Day Care**

CCS is paid in certain circumstances when a family is charged for their enrolment when their child does not attend. Under the Child Care Subsidy each child is eligible to receive CCS for an initial 42 days of absences, per financial year, which can be used for any reason and without proof of circumstances (includes public holidays). Once the initial 42 days absence days have been exhausted, additional absences may be claimed in certain circumstances.

The FAO maintains a count of absences used by each child across all approved services for the financial year. You can obtain details of absences through the online services section of the FAO’s website or through your Educator.

**Public Holidays**

Normal fees are charged for public holidays when your child would normally have been in attendance on that day, if it were not a public holiday. If or when your child uses the program, on a public holiday, an additional public holiday surcharge may apply, please discuss this with your Educator.

**Attendance Records/Educator Timesheets**

To comply with the Department of Education, Family Assistance Office, licensing and insurance requirements, accurate attendance record sheets need to be completed. It is your responsibility or your representative, to accurately record and initial the actual arrival and departure times for each day of your child’s attendance, which is authorised by your signature through Harmony Web our electronic attendance platform. Signatures are also required for absences. It is an offence under the Crimes Act to supply false and misleading information on the Attendance Record.

**Fees, Charges & Levies**

Each Educator sets their own fees, charging practices and conditions in consultation with the Coordination Unit. They will provide you with their fee schedule/brochure and discuss with you at the interview the cost of early learning and frequency of payments required.

The hourly fee for a non-school aged child during regular “core” hours ranges from $8.70 to $12.50. The hourly fee for out-of-core or “casual” hours ranges from $8.70 to $15.45. The weekend hourly fee ranges from $10.00 to $14.00.

Included in each hourly fee is a $1.45 per hour administrative levy retained by the Coordination Unit to assist in the administration of the service.

An Educator may charge a late pick up/early arrival levy of $10.00 per hour or part thereof.

Families pay standard fees for absences, e.g. sickness or family’s leave. Families are not charged fees by an Educator if their service is CLOSED, e.g. Educator’s leave, sickness, etc.

Costs are charged for extra services provided by the Educator, e.g. food, travel, and visits to playgroup.

**Opening & Contracted Hours**

Each Educator sets their own opening days and hours and may have minimum contracted hours, i.e. 6 hours per day. They will discuss this with you at the interview.

The scheme’s core hours are between 8:00am and 6:00pm Monday to Friday. Out-of-core hours are outside the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm Monday to Friday and any non-regular hours which may be required during core hours, i.e. casual attendance. Weekend hours are 12:00 midnight Friday to 12:00 midnight Sunday.

You are required to complete a placement agreement with your child’s Educator for the hours required for early learning– these hours are considered “contracted” hours. You will need to consult with the Educator if you wish to change the contracted days and/or hours of enrolment. To decrease days and/or hours of your enrolment at least 14 days’ notice is required.

Educators, as well as families of children in Family Day Care, budget both their time and their expected income. It is important to be on time both when leaving and collecting your child from the Educator. However, sometimes delays are unavoidable so if you are going to be late in collecting your child please contact your Educator as a matter of courtesy. A late pick up/early arrival levy may apply.

**Cancellation of Enrolment**

Families and Educators are required to give **at least 14 days’ notice** of a child’s last day of enrolment. Payment of fees must be finalised prior to ceasing \the enrolment.

**Refusal of an Enrolment**

An enrolment will be refused:

* + if a child is not enrolled with the scheme,
  + for non-payment of fees,
  + if the parent does not abide by the Policies and Procedures of Goulburn Family Day Care,
  + if your child is unwell and not able to participate in the usual programme and planned activities.

**Food**

It is important to create a positive eating environment where children will enjoy meal times and develop positive and healthy eating habits. Our “Food and Nutrition” policy contains further information.

You are required to supply your own child’s food and drinks that are nutritious, adequate in quantity, varied and appropriate to the developmental, cultural and religious needs of your child.

Educators are to ensure that the above are supplied for each child in their program and are to offer them to the child at frequent intervals. If adequate food and drink is not supplied by families, Educators are obliged to provide and charge accordingly.

Cakes etc. may be provided for a special occasion such as a child’s birthday, however families should discuss this with the Educator in advance to ensure that allergies and children’s health is managed.

**Clothes & Sundry Items**

With our changeable weather it will be necessary to provide clothing for both warm and cold days. Each child should be suitably dressed for the day upon arrival.

When your child starts in Family Day Care please discuss the following items which may be required:

* A complete change of clothing for both hot and cold weather including spare underwear and socks
* 6 to 8 nappies
* Extra pants for older children, especially when being toilet trained
* Toiletry items, e.g. tissues, baby wipes, sunscreen, etc.
* Bibs
* Raincoat
* Sun protection needs, e.g. sun hat, sunscreen
* Bottles, dummies, etc.
* Comforter, blanket or toy.

**Excursions**

Some Educators take children on excursions away from the Family Day Care home. These excursions are a part of the program of experiences these Educators provide for the children.

Prior to any excursion taking place, the Educator will conduct a risk assessment of the excursion venue which includes possible hazards travelling to and from the excursion and also at the venue and how these hazards can be minimized or eliminated. Families can see the risk assessment related to any excursion their child may be involved in. Parent/guardian consent is also required prior to any excursion. If you have any concerns you should discuss these with the Educator or Goulburn Family Day Care Coordination Unit staff.

**Car Safety**

Babies and children of all ages will be restrained with the appropriate car seat, harness or seatbelt at all times while travelling in any vehicle.

**Smoking**

All Educators provide a smoke free environment so please do not smoke in a Family Day Care home or garden or at the Coordination Unit premises.

**Child Protection**

Family Day Care Educators and staff, as mandatory reporters, are required to report any children suspected to be at risk of significant harm from child abuse or neglect to Department of Communities & Justice.

The service has a written policy for dealing with these issues. This policy will be followed for allegations made against any staff members, Educators or others involved in the service. This is a requirement under the Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection and Community Services Act) 1998.

All Educators must attend training in child protection. Educators take appropriate measures to protect children from all forms of child abuse and must ensure that they supervise and protect the health and wellbeing of the children at all times.

If you as a parent/guardian have any issues or concerns in relation to child protection and the wellbeing of your child please contact the Coordination Unit. You may also report any suspected case of child abuse to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111.

**Complaints & Concerns**

While every effort is made by the service to ensure that families are happy with the early learning program, there may be times when concerns arise. Educators and Coordination Unit staff welcome constructive feedback from parents and recognise that open communication is important in ensuring that the enrolment is successful. Families are asked to talk to the Educators about concerns in the first instance and follow this up with the Coordination Unit if needed.

Complaints by phone can be made to either of the following:

Goulburn Family Day Care Director, Ashley Sturgiss: 4823 4052

Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT Executive Manager of Disability & Early Learning, Simon Bennett: 4823 4048

Written complaints should be addressed to:

The Director

Goulburn Family Day Care

126 Cowper Street

Goulburn NSW 2580

**Compliments & Praise**

Like everyone, our service, Educators and staff included, are always delighted to hear of the positive experiences families and children have in our service. Any letters of congratulations or thanks that are received at the Coordination Unit will be welcomed. These will be referred to the person or people involved and will also be made available to the Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT Executive Manager of Disability & Early Learning, Simon Bennett.

**Checklist for Families**

* Read this Family Handbook. It contains information about the questions you may have for an Educator and ways in which you can work with an Educator to help your child settle into early learning. Please keep it in case you wish to refer to it from time to time.
* Contact the Department of Human Services FAO Families Hotline on 13 61 50 or via online services. If your child has never been enrolled in an approved service advise them that your child will be starting an enrolment with an approved early learning service or visit [education.gov.au/childcare](file:///\\angsrv0\savfdc\Shannon's%20Folder\FDC\Forms\education.gov.au\childcare)
* Complete your eligibility claim for Child Care Subsidy.
* Complete a “Family Application for Enrolment/Child Placement Agreement in Approved Child Care – Family Day Care Service” form provided in the information package.
* If you did not provide a copy of your child’s immunisation record, medical plans or other information, please arrange for the documents to reach the Coordination Unit before your child commences with the Educator. The office is open 8:30am to 3:30pm Monday to Friday. Please note your child is unable to commence their enrolment unless we have an up-to-date immunisation history statement or written certified medical exemption from a medical practitioner.
* Contact Coordination Unit at the office whenever you change your contact details and also advise your child’s Educator.
* The Coordination Unit can be contacted at any time to discuss your child’s learning and development or any other matter.